Secoya language

The **Secoya language** has been classified as a member of the Tucanoan linguistic family and the sub-family, Western Tucanoan, in Ecuador and Peru. The remaining sub-families are Eastern Tucanoan and Central Tucanoan, comprising at least fourteen languages spoken in the region of the Vaupés River in Colombia and Brazil. Included among the Secoya are a number of people called Angoteros. Although their language comprises only some dialectal differences of Secoya, there are no other communicative obstacles present. The Siona of the Eno River, linguistically different from the Siona of the Putumayo, say there are significant dialectal differences between their language and Secoya, but are still considered a part of them. In ethnographic publications, the Secoya go by other alternate names as well: Encabellado, Pioje (meaning "no" in Secoya),[3] Santa Maria, and Angutera.[4]

Secoya	
Paikoka	
Native to	Ecuador, Peru
Region	Putumayo River, Vaupés River
Ethnicity	Secoya people
Native speakers	1,200 (2007)[1]

Language family	Tucanoan
	■ Western
	  ■ Napo
	    ■ Siona–Secoya
	      ■ **Secoya**

Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`sey`
Glottolog	`seco1241` (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/seco1241)[2]

Contents

Phonology

Voiceless Stops

The <u>voiceless stops</u> /p, t, k, kʷ/ are the same as Spanish, however the <u>aspiration</u> is more articulated in Secoya. The phoneme /t/ is pronounced with the tip of the tongue making contact with the upper teeth. The velar-labialized /kʷ/ is pronounced similarly to /k/, but with rounding of the lips. The glottal stop /ʔ/ almost disappears when strong stress on the previous syllable does not occur.

Voiced Stops

In <u>intervocalic</u> context, the <u>voiced stop</u> /d/ is performed by the simple variant [r], equal to the Spanish intervocalic /r/. Nasal speech is performed with the nasal consonant [n].

Aspiration

The voiceless phonemes /sʰ/ and /h/ are both articulated in the <u>alveolar</u> position, making them difficult to distinguish. The /s/ is pronounced a little harder and determines a dull elongation prior to an <u>unstressed vowel</u>. The phoneme /zʰ/ has some laryngeal stress and expresses the <u>laryngealization</u> on adjacent vowels.

Nasals

The nasal consonant /m/ is pronounced the same as in Spanish. The sound **n**, which is phonemic in other Western Tucanoan languages, is contained in Secoya as a variant of the voiced stop /d/.

Glides

The glides /w/ and /y/ are almost equal to the vowels /u/ and /i/ respectively, but more tightly articulated. The /w/ resembles the *hu* in the Spanish "huevo". When it occurs at an adjacent nasal vowel, [w] becomes nasalized. The /y/ is pronounced almost like that in Spanish, but the Secoya articulate it with slightly more friction. When it occurs contiguous to a nasal vowel, the result becomes nasalized and sounds like the Spanish **ñ**.

Consonants & Vowels

Consonants

The [y] symbol in Secoya grammar corresponds to the [j] symbol in the I.P.A. system.

		Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labial-Velar	Glottal
Stop	Voiceless	p	t		k	kʷ	ʔ
	Voiced		d				
Aspirated	Voiceless		sʰ				h
	Voiced		zʰ				
Nasal		m					
Glide		w		y			

Vowels

Back vowels are made with rounded lips and the others are made with non-rounded lips.

Height	Position		
	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ɨ	u
Low	e	a	o

Morphology

Nouns

The noun in Secoya is distinguished, in most forms, through the general category and the specific unit. The basic form of a noun, without suffixes, indicates the general category (men, children, canoes, stones, eggs, etc.) without specifying a definite number of elements. To indicate the singular or plural, that is, a number of

specific elements, suffix classifiers (in the case of inanimate nouns) or gender suffixes (in the case of animate nouns) are added. To indicate a definite number of inanimate objects, a plural suffix is added to a noun. When the word refers to a number of specific elements, we use the definite article in the Spanish translation. However, it can also be translated with the indefinite article.

Category (General)		Unit (Specific)		Units (Specific)
pa̱i		**pa̱i-o**		**pa̱i-o hua'i**
"person"		"person, woman" (f)		"people" (f)
tse̱'a		**tse̱'a-quë**		**tse̱'a-co hua'i**
"owners"		"owner" (m)		"owners" (m)
yo		**yo-huë**		**yo-huë-a**
"canoe"		"canoe" (f)		"canoes" (f)
quëna		**quëna-me**		**quëna-me-a̱**
"wire"		"wire" (m)		"wires" (m)
huea		**huea-pa**		**huea-pa-a̱**
"corn"		"cornfield" (m)		"cornfields" (m)
hue̱quë		**hue̱quë-o**		**hue̱quë-o hua'i**
"tapir"		"tapir, female" (f)		"tapirs"(f)

Animate Nouns

Animals

The nouns denoting animals appear in their basic form without suffix to indicate the generic type. To indicate the singular, the suffix *-e* or *-o* is added. To form the plural noun, the specifier *hua'i* is added to any of the two forms.

Supernatural and Spiritual

The nouns denoting supernatural beings and celestial bodies appear in their basic form to indicate both the generic as the singular. To form the plural, add *-o* and *hua'i*. All of these beings appear as characters in the animistic legends of the Secoya.

Person/Number/Gender

Person

The nouns denoting people typically lead gender suffixes with a masculine or feminine singular. To form the plural noun, the specifier *hua'i* is added. The nouns whose basic form is a verb or adjective gender carry the suffix *-ë* for singular masculine or *-o* for singular female. After the vowel /o/, the masculine ending becomes

-*u* and after the vowels /e/ and /i/, becomes -*i*. (If both vowels are identical, the vowel is reduced to one)

Number

The number describes the head noun in the same way it does the adjective. Their order in the noun phrase is before the adjective, when both appear.

Cardinal Numbers	
te'i	one (m)
te'o	one (f)
te'e	one (inanimate)
caya	two
toaso̱	three
cajese'e	four
te'e jë̱të	five
si'a jë̱-ña	ten (Lit: on both hands)

Te'e   hua'ti-re   pa-yë'
 one machete-cd have-pres
      "I have a machete"

Caya   naso   hua'i-re huaë-'ë.
two woolly monkeys   pl-cd   kill-pas
"I killed two woolly monkeys."

Si'a jë̱-ña huë-ña   pa-ji'i.
all hand-pl house-pl to be-pas.3sg.m
          "I had ten houses"

To emphasize a number, express the same grammatical agreement suffix classifiers in the case of the adjective.

Toaso̱-ño-a̱   so̱quë-ño-a̱-re   cua̱cue daë-'ë.
three-cl.nom-pl árbol-cl.nom-pl-cd load to come-pas
          "They came carrying beams, three."

The noun that the number describes can be suppressed when the context permits.

Yë'ë ts̱i̱   te'i   maca-pi oi-quë   ñu-ji'i
 my child one.m single-sj cry.fz.m sitting-pas.3sg.m
          "Of my children, one sat crying."

Si'a hua'i saë-'ĕ. Sa-ni, caya hua'i-re huaë-'ĕ
 all   pl   go-pas go-sec, two   pl-cd   kill-pas
      "We all went and killed two (animals)."

Gender

General		Masculine		Feminine		Plural
yo'je (verb)		**yo'je-i**		**yo'je-o**		**yo'je-o hua'i**
"to be back"		"little brother"		"little sister"		"little brothers"
ai (adj.)		**ai (-i)**		**ai-o**		**ai-o hua'i**
"old"		"old man"		"old woman"		"old men"
huano (adj.)		**huano-u**		**huano-o**		**huano-o hua'i**
"old"		"old man"		"old woman"		"old men"
esa (adj.)		**esa-ë**		**esa-o**		**esa-o hua'i**
"fast"		"rapid"		"rapid"		"rapids"
jo'ya (adj.)		**jo'ya-ë**		**jo'ya-o**		**jo'ya-o hua'i**
"domesticated"		"domesticated male dog"		"domesticated female dog"		"domesticated male dogs"

Classification

Suffix Classifiers

The suffix classifiers indicate, besides the idea of a specific unit, the form or function of the object, conceptualized by the Secoya perspective.

"something that has a defined edge"
-hua ja'o-hua   "blade"
      ta̱ta-hua   "shoulder"

-hue **(a variation of the above -hua)**
      yëru-hue   "shore"

"something with something inside"
-huë yaca-huë "something with a gap inside"
      jëo-huë   "blowgun"

"something in the form of a line"
-me yëi-me   "rope" (Lit: "kapok rope")
     quëna-me "wire" (Lit: "metal wire")

"something long, cylindrical and flexible"
-mo ji̱co-mo   "tail (of a tiger)"
     pi̱si-mo   "thick vine"

"something with permanent roots"
-ñë so̱quë-ñë   "tree"
     co̱sa-ñë   "Milpeso palm"

"something that has a flat plane"
-pa ya'ri-pa "leaf of a conambo palm"
     ca̱i-pa   "coconut matting (to sleep on)"

-pe "something with undefined form or function"

    hui'ya-pe   "fat"

-pë **"something with a round form, shows a bulge**

    s_i_o-pë   "forehead"

"something with shade above or the appearance of a cave"

-po yi'o-po   "mouth"

    ya'huë sëti sa'a-po   "posterior"

-ra "lagoon"

    cuya-ra   "pond to bathe (tapir)"

    hua'i-ra   "lagoon with fish"

–rë "something made with mesh"

    hu_a_te-rë   "knapsack"

    j_a_ë-rë   "hammock"

-rí **"surface"**

    ca'i-rí   "slippery surface"

"something concave"

-ro quëna-ro   "metal pot"

    soto-ro   "clay pot"

"something which hooks or attaches"

-se̲'e yo-se̲'e   "adze (used to carve a canoe)"

    se̲'que-se̲'e   "fish hook"

"river, ravine"

-ya tsia-ya   "river (Lit: surface of a river)"

    sao-ya   "fast flowing river"

"something long, thin, and rigid"

-yo sehua-yo "the rod of a yarina palm"

    hu_a_so-yo "beam"

Nouns that function as classifiers

The following inanimate nouns can be freeform in some contexts and can also describe the form or function of an inanimate noun.

"seed, something small and round"

    ora c_a_   "chontaduro seed"

c_a_ ne'e c_a_   "canangucho palm seed"

    huea c_a_ "corn seed"

"slab, flat surface"

t_o_to pë'ë s_i_ t_o_to "flat surface of an alligator head"

    s_o_quë t_o_to   "buttress"

Inanimate nouns without classifiers

Some inanimate nouns never appear with a suffix classifier; in this case the sense of generality or unit is inferred from the context. However, an adjective or another attribute can change them.

huë'e "house"
 tsio "seed"
 ma'a "road"
hua'ti "machete"

Space

Locatives are formed by adding to a basic form, whether it's a noun, verb, adverb, demonstrative, or other, to one of the suffixes indicating space or time.

Locative Suffix -ro

The locative suffix -**ro** "place" means a point or region. They don't appear with nouns, but with other grammatical forms to form a noun.

ai (adverb)	"vastly"	ai-ro	"the vast place"
jaso (trans. verb)	"shoot"	jaso-ro	"the place to shoot"
ti̱ (demonstrative)	"other"	ti̱-ro	"other place"

Locative Suffix -ja̱'a

Locative suffix -**ja̱'a** "about, near" describes the relationship of a locative component.

ma'a	"way"	ma'a-ja̱'a	"along the way"
ai-ro	"mountain"	ai-ro-ja̱'a	"by the mountain"
yëru-hue	"shore"	yëru-hue-ja̱'a	"near the shore"

Demonstratives

The demonstrative pronoun **ja** "that" occurs with suffixes classifiers, local or temporary, to refer to an object, place or time.

ja̱-pë "that object with a round or bulging form"

ja̱-huë "that object that holds or has something in it"

ja̱-ñë "that object that has permanent roots"

The demonstrative pronoun **iye** "this" occurs with suffix classifiers, local and temporary, as with the separate **hua'i** for plural words and **maca** to refer to a person, place, thing. These refer to a specific previously defined nominal element. When a gender suffix is added, the form of the pronoun is uses **i-**.

i-yo "this long, cylindrical, and rigid thing"

ja̱-huë "this river"

"this woman"

ja̱-ñë

Time

Tense

There are times for all people and genders, distinguished in the declarative modes of involvement perspective: the present, the immediate past, the distant past and future. The immediate past is not so much of recent events, but events that the speaker considers to be important in the present. It is distinguished by the immediate past speaker who considers unimportant events in the present. That is, they are already forgotten or outdated events.

	Present	Immediate Past	Distant Past	Future
3sg.m	-ji	-pi/-ji'i	-a̱'-ji'i	-sipi
3sg.f	-co	-co/-co'ë	-a̱'-co'ë	-sio
other	-yë	-huë/-'e	-a̱'-huë'ë	-si'i

The following examples demonstrate the present and immediate past tense and use the root **caje** "down".

Tsia-ya-na   caje-ji
río-cl.nom-des bajar-pres.3sg.m "He's down the river."

Tsia-ya-na   caje-pi
río-cl.nom-des bajar-immediate.past.3sg.m "He went down the river."

This next example demonstrates the immediate past tense when the basic form of the verb ends in [í] or [ʔí]. It uses the root **sa'i** "go".

Tsia-ya-na   sa-ji'í
río-cl.nom-des bajar-immediate.past.3sg.m "He went down the river"

This example demonstrates the distant past. This category is pointed out with the suffix -a̱'- after the basic form of the verb.

Tsia-ya-na   caje-a̱'-ji'í
río-cl.nom-des bajar-distant.past.3sg.m "He's already down the river"

This example demonstrates future tense.

Tsia-ya-na   caje-sipi
río-cl.nom-des bajar-future.3sg.m "He will go down the river"

Modality

Potential Suffix

The potential suffix is demonstrated by the addition of -**j̠ai** on the basic form of the verb. It has the variants -**j̠a'** and -**j̠a̠** and indicates that the event is to take place.

 hue'o-j̠ai-j̠ë'ë
cargar-pot-imp "I'm going to load it."

  quërë-j̠a̠-'a̠-huë'ë
arrastrar-pot-rem-pos "We will drag it."

Irrealis Suffix

The irrealis suffix is demonstrated by the addition of -**ra'** on the basic form of the verb. It indicates that the event has not been performed. It's never used with the present or future tense.

 Sai-co hua'i   pa-ni   yëquë t̠i'a-ra'-huë
ir-fz   pl   estar-sec nos.excl llegar-irr-pas
"If we were marching, we would come."

     De'o-co   pa'i-to   yë'ë-pi   huero-ra'-huë
ser.bueno-fz.f   ser-si   yo-sj   comprar-irr-pas
"If it had been in good condition (canoe), I would've bought it."

Obligative Suffix

The obligative suffix is demonstrated by the addition of -**t̠i** to the basic form of the verb and indicates an urgency to perform the action. It can be coupled with the -**ra'** irrealis suffix.

  Dai-si-co   hua'i   pa-ni   naso-re   hua-t̠i-ra'-huë
venir-cto-fz   pl   estar-sec chorongo-cd   matar-obl-irr-pas
"If they had come, we would surely have killed the woolly monkeys."

Toaso̠   jaso-huë-a̠-pi   hua-ni   j̠e̠o-j̠a-t̠i-ra'-huë
tres   escopeta-cl.nom-pl-con matar-sec finalizar-pot-obl-irr-pas
"With three shotguns we will surely kill them off completely."

Predicates and Arguments

Pe'o
    pe'o   -o
not be.LOC PFV.3SG.F
"There was none"

Peo'ji
   p'eo   -ji
not have IPFV.3sg.m
"He didn't have"

Obliques

The use of the oblique case markers in Secoya is not very complex. The oblique case suffixes *-na*, *-hã-ã*, and *-hã'de* are used to express specific grammatical relations. The first oblique case suffix *-na* expresses the spatial relation of goal, *-hã-ã* marks objects expressing a path, and *-hã'de* marks accompaniment.

Grammatical Case

Unlike Andean languages (Quechua, Aymara), which mark nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive cases, Amazonian languages like Secoya are limited to locative and instrumental/comitative cases. Enclitics are used to indicate grammatical case and the following suffixes indicate the nominal items that are linked to it.

-pi (source of action, agent)

Ëja-o hua'i-pi   yë'e-ni de'o-ye   sehuo-caë-'ë
head-nf pl-sj   me-cd be.good-pp.nf answer-bto-pas
"The headmen answered me"

-ni (movement to an animate object)

Yë'ë pa-co-ni   oca-na   sao-huë
mi   wife-fz.f-cd rio.down-des send-pas
"My wife would send us downstream."

-na (destination)

Yë'ë ja'quë   do'i-na   moto-pë-re   huero-huë
my   father   account-des engine-cl.nom-cd purchase-pas
"Charge the engine to my father's account"

-re/-té (reference)

Noca   yo-huë-na   aya-huë
bananas.cd canoe-cl.nom-des add.in-pas
"I put bananas in the canoe."

Endangerment

The Ecuadorian-Peruvian War in 1941 had a great impact on the life of the Secoya after it created a separation of the local groups by splitting up the region. This division resulted in the obsolescence of many customs and traditions that were once prevalent in their culture. In the early 1970s, the Texaco and Gulf oil companies converged on Ecuador when massive petroleum reserves were discovered underground. The extensive periods of oil drilling ravaged many of their settlement areas, culminating in disastrous ecological problems like water and soil contamination. Even today, the Secoya still face many problems involving geopolitical feuds, harassment by oil companies, and the colonization and assimilation of Mestizo culture. The language status of the Siona-Secoya group is threatened, with only 550 speakers in Ecuador and 680 in Peru.

Notes

1. Secoya (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/sey/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Secoya" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/seco1241). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Steward, Julian H., Western Tucanoan Tribes
4. Johnson, Orville E., Gramatica Secoya

References

- Johnson, Orville E.. (1990). Gramatica secoya (Ed. limitada, 1. ed.). Quito, Ecuador: Inst. Lingüístico de Verano.

External links

- ELAR archive of Documentation of Ecuadorian Secoya (http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0327)